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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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April 13, 2005

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley   
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – MID VALLEY  
YOUTH CENTER**

We have completed a review of Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by the Mid Valley Youth Center. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home is an 84-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 12-17 who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home was providing services for 48 Los Angeles County Probation children, two Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health children, seven San Diego County Probation children, six Santa Clara Probation children, three Sacramento County Probation children, three Riverside County Probation children, three San Bernardino County Probation children, three San Jose County Probation children, one San Mateo County Probation child, one Ventura County Probation child, one Alameda County Probation child, one Orange County Probation child, and one child placed by New York County Probation.

Mid Valley Youth Center is located in the Third District.

**Scope of Review**

The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covered basic child safety and licensing issues, and included an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, facility inspections, and

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interviews with five children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

**Summary of Findings**

Generally, the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. The Agency does need to make repairs to its facility and provide all residents with regular opportunities to maintain photo albums/life books.

Attached is a detailed report of the review findings.

**Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management is required to provide a corrective action plan to the Probation Department within 15 business days from the postmark date of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:asl

- c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
- David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
- Paul Higa, Acting Chief Probation Officer
- Dr. Jordan, Executive Director, Mid Valley Youth Center
- Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
- Public Information Office
- Audit Committee

**Mid Valley Youth Center  
7533 Van Nuys Blvd.  
Van Nuys, Ca 91405  
Phone: (818) 904-0707  
License No.: 191220771  
Rate Classification Level: 12**

## **I. Facility and Environment**

*(Facility Based - No Sample)*

### **Method of assessment – Observation**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Five**

### **Comments:**

Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential community. The Group Home is spacious and comfortable. The Group Home is nicely landscaped and blends well with the other homes on the block. There were no observable safety hazards.

The interior décor of the Group Home provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are nicely decorated. The resident bedrooms are spacious, comfortable, and personalized to each child's desire with posters, pictures, and knick-knacks. However, there are areas that need improvement.

The walls in the hallways on the first and second floors and the dining room are dirty. The interior doorways and window panes have flaking and chipped paint. The linoleum floor in the hallway is stained, and couches in all of the resident lounges are torn.

The walls in the residents' bedrooms are dirty and some of the light fixtures in the residents' bedrooms are broken or missing light covers.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, TVs, and DVD players. There are books and resource materials, including computers with a variety of programs.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Mid Valley Youth Center management:**
  - a. Repaint the walls in the hallways and the dining room.**
  - b. Repaint the interior doorways and window panes.**

- c. Clean the floor in the hallways.
- d. Replace the torn couches in the residents' lounges.
- e. Repaint the walls in the residents' bedrooms.
- f. Repair or replace the broken light fixtures throughout the facility.

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Five**

### **Comments:**

Residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Residents received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, realistic, measurable, and time specific. There was documentation to support the placement workers' participation in the development and update of the NSPs.

The quarterly reports are current, comprehensive, and appropriately focus on the goals of the NSPs.

The residents are provided with psychological testing, and emotional and developmental counseling as required by the Program Statement. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show evidence of residents receiving regular individual and/or group therapy.

### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Five**

**Comments:**

Residents are attending school. Their records contain current semester report cards and/or progress reports. Residents reported that they are provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feel that the Group Home is supportive of their academic progress.

The Agency's program includes the development of residents' daily living skills. The residents are involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is discussed as needed and employment preparation encouraged.

Residents are offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Residents have the opportunity to work and manage their own money.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**IV. Recreation and Activities**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Five**

**Comments:**

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. Residents expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. Residents reported that they participate in planning some of the activities. Residents have free time and are able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation is provided to and from the activities.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **V. Psychotropic Medication**

### **Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents for thirty-one case files**

#### **Comments:**

Residents have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that the children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

#### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **VI. Personal Rights**

### **Method of assessment – Resident interviews**

#### **Sample size for resident interviews: Five**

#### **Comments:**

Residents expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff. Residents participate in an initial orientation and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. Residents reported that they feel safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with their daily living functions.

Residents reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with their ability to participate in menu development. They reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff.

Residents reported that they are assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. Residents are able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls. They are permitted to contact their workers, attorneys, and family members as needed. Residents are able to attend religious services of their choice and feel that the Agency is respectful of their cultural lifestyles. The Agency allows the residents to celebrate holidays.

Residents reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Residents are aware of their right to refuse medication.

## **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations for this section.

### **VII. Clothing and Allowance**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Five**

#### **Comments:**

The Agency provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to residents. The Group Home supplies its residents with the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance and residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Agency provides residents with the required minimum base allowance, which they are able to increase according to the Agency's behavioral system. Residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

Two of the five residents have not been provided with an opportunity to maintain a photo album/life book.

#### **Recommendation**

- 2. Mid Valley Youth Center management provide all residents with regular opportunities to maintain photo albums/life books.**